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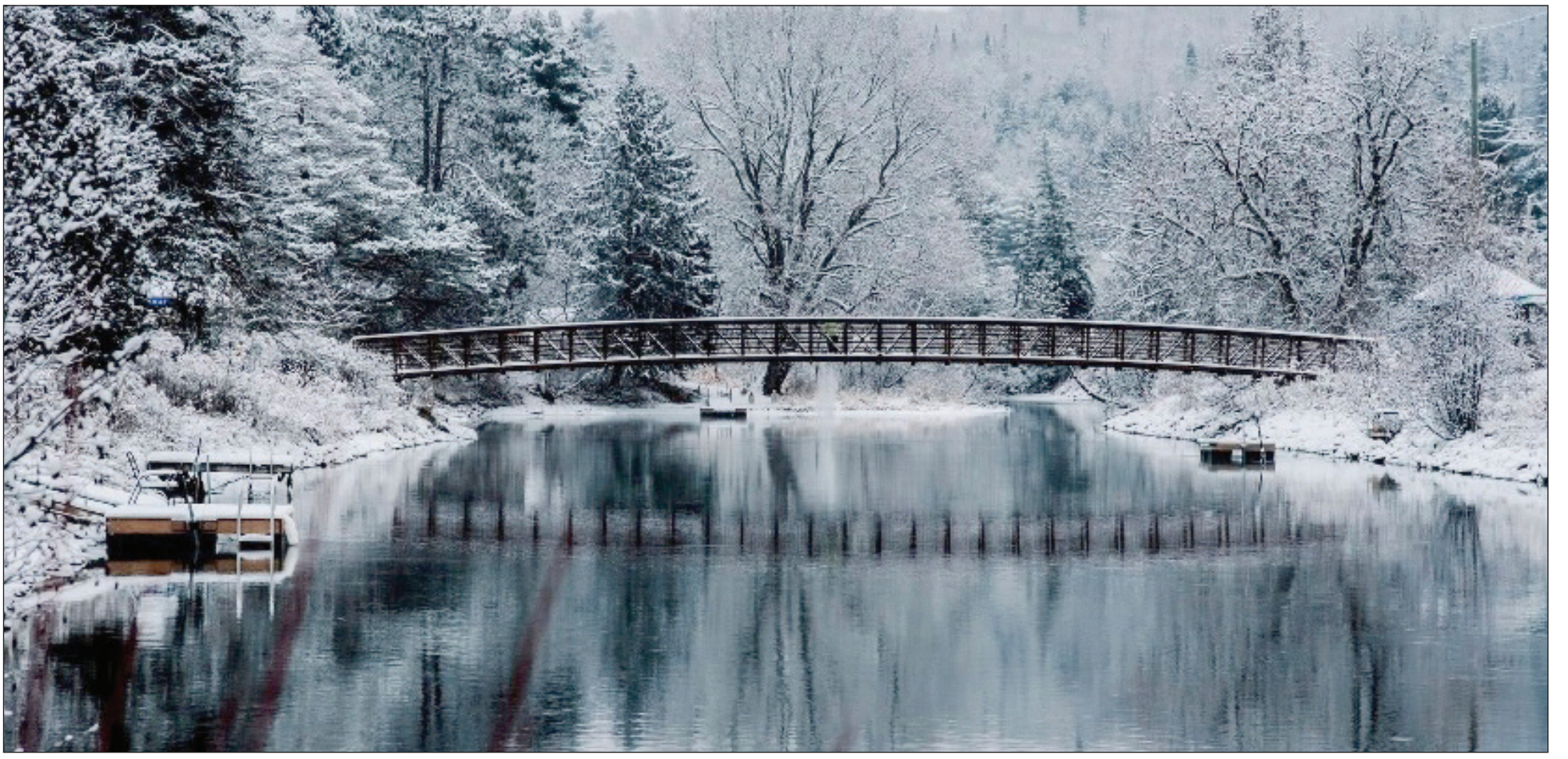

Finally

After weeks of wondering when winter would finally hit, a snowstorm over the weekend finally kicked the county into winter mode, relieving many who rely on the snow for their seasonal businesses. /Photo submitted by Chantel Smith

MH eases fire fine penalties for resident

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Minden Hills will give a resident a break on a fine for daytime burning about two years ago.

Township council decided during its Jan. 11 regular meeting to remove the harmonized sale tax and to waive interest and overdue penalties on an invoice issued to resident Pat Bradley.

In a letter to council, Bradley explained how her son was burning paper, cardboard, and perhaps some food wrappers in a metal barrel in May 2022. The burning followed a long period of rain and Bradley said in her letter that there was no strong wind during the burn.

Fire Chief Shain Duda approached Bradley's son at the barrel and issued him a fine for burning during the day and burning household garbage, Bradley wrote.

"I urged my son to pay the fine when I

see COUNCILLORS page 2

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HCDC launches LIP once again

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

If you're a not-for-profit in the community, this may be your time to receive a little extra support as you dive into your year ahead.

The Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC) has once again launched their annual Local Initiatives Program, or LIP for short. "This grant is all about what people need in the community, and some great ideas," said Heather Reid, the program and operations coordinator at HCDC. "We try to keep it broad so that it's open to as many organizations as possible."

The purpose of the LIP program is to support community economic development by funding unique projects that showcase the breadth of initiatives and ideas across the region. Last year, HCDC provided funding to organizations such as the Minden Food Centre, Abbey Retreat Centre, Canoe FM, Minden Pride, and the Kushog Lake Property Owners Association to name a few. "We usually receive between 25 to 30 applications," said Reid, "and we try to fund as many of them as we can."

Pulling from a pot of $60, 000 this year, the funding for the projects stems from the interest earned on loans HCDC provides to the community. "So we do charge interest on our loans," said Reid, "but then that money is all cycled right back into the community."

Aside from being a registered not-for-profit organization, there is really no rhyme or reason when it comes to who can apply for the funding. "The only time we had specific focus for the grant was when it was COVID-19 related, but now, anything goes," said Reid.

This includes performances, studies, community activities, gardens, and more. Reid also noted that there is no bias when it comes to organizations applying year over year. "As long as you have a creative project, that's all that matters," she said.

Reid understands that in the not-for-profit world, applying for grants can be a full time job. That's why she wanted to get the word out that HCDC is there to provide support throughout the entirety of the application process.

"You can reach out to us anytime," she said. "Most of the time, we do see the majority of applications before they come in. Then we can help tweak them where needed, and find the ways they are most likely to receive that funding."

The deadline to get full feedback on the application is March 5, 2024, with the final application deadline of March 11. If you are interested in applying, contact Heather Reid at hreid@haliburtoncdc.ca.

"The unique thing about the LIP program is that it can act as a catalyst for so many great community projects," she said. "It's all just about that really great idea."

Hungry eyes

A wolf peers at its audience before diving into an afternoon snack at the Wolf Centre on Jan. 10, 2024. /TIM YANO special to the *Times*

Councillors consider waiving fees

from page 1

received the statement in the mail, but he did not," she wrote in her letter to council. "He has since moved out and seems to have no intention of paying it now."

Bradley said she's been trying for more than a year to have the issue addressed.

"Meanwhile, I have been getting notices that interest is being accrued," she wrote.

"I am willing to pay a fine but ask that it be considerably lower than the current bill as I have personally always adhered to the rules of the municipal fire code."

Coun. Ivan Ingram said he doesn't know how much the fine is for, but he suggested the interest on the initial fine could be waived.

"It's been almost two years since this all started," he said. "I'm not sure what the holdup was."

While the homeowner claims the material being burned was paper, Duda said household trash was actually being burned.

Duda said he has spoken with Bradley about the invoice and he advised her that he couldn't do anything about the fees and charges issued.

"I reached out and I advised her that, if anything would have to happen to that invoice, she'd have to come to council to see about any fees or charges being decreased," he said.

Coun. Tammy McKelvey reminded council that the HST does not apply to municipal fines.

"So the HST at a minimum has to come off of this (fine)," she said.

McKelvey said Bradley references a number of instances without citing specific dates when she tried to contact township staff over a year regarding the bill.

"It's unfortunate that it didn't get addressed at that point," she said.

The HST has to be removed and, because the invoice didn't get corrected, she said she would like to see interest charges removed from the account.

"If she pays it right away, obviously," she said. "And I believe every time we send out past due notice here, we charge five dollars. Perhaps all that can come off, too."

Duda said that, after council decided to remove HST from fines, he worked with Department of Finance staff to reconcile fines to not include that tax.

"I guess we missed one or two," Duda said. "We'll go back through and see what else we have to fix.

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Finding her ‘North Star’; the story of Maryam Monsef

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

Sitting down to write about the most recent Speaker’s Series on Maryam Monsef was no easy feat.

The Haliburton County Community Co-operative offers the series on a monthly basis; featuring people from all over the country to share their stories with a captive crowd. I’ve heard presentations on canoe trips, guitar concerts, scotch tastings. The Co-op has a knack for bringing in folks that appeal to everyone.

But in all the presentations I’ve watched so far, no one has been like Maryam Monsef.

The former politician and current human rights advocate stood in front of the crowd without a notebook or a slide show as a parachute.

Instead, she pulled stories from her own journey. Her life before, during, and after politics. She dove into the realities of immigration, of women in the workforce, of running for mayor before turning 30, of being on an international political stage.

She had the audience enraptured in her journey. Captivated by each next step.

By the time the presentation was over, I had a notebook of scribbles, of stories, of inspiration.

But no clear direction on the story.

How do you write a story on someone who has waded so many waters?

I looked back at how she started her presentation; by transporting the crowd to Afghanistan in the 1960s. “The year is 1964,” she started. “There are four boys in a family, and suddenly, a little girl is born. Her father takes one look at her, and says, ‘you’re going to be the first woman doctor in Afghanistan.’”

She goes on to share that the little girl grew up thriving academically, and received a full scholarship to attend school anywhere in the world.

But as the girl is weighing her education options, war breaks out across the country, and the girl’s brother is taken from his room, never to be seen again. “When we lose things,” Monsef said, “we mourn. People, dreams, it doesn’t matter, we mourn.”

The girl, now a woman, changed her life direction. She went on to meet a suitor, who she fell madly in love with, and they started a family. Yet within a few years, the man is killed at the Afghanistan/Iran border, and the woman was left with young children, as a widow at the age of 24. With that, her dreams continued to change.

Maryam Monsef spoke to an engaged crowd at the Fish Hatchery on Jan. 10 about her life before, during, and after politics. /Photo submitted

It was then that the woman was faced with a choice; continue life as they knew it in Afghanistan, with the reality that her daughters would likely be sold off for marriage, or move and start over again. This time, in Canada.

“And that decision my mother made was the biggest gift anyone could have ever given us,” said Monsef.

Having some loose connections in Peterborough, her family settled into life in a new country, knowing only the most basic of English, and navigating the highs and lows together. “We came to Canada with broken hearts for what we left behind,” she said, “but big hopes and dreams for the opportunities that lay ahead.”

Monsef shared that when her family arrived in Canada, they greatly benefited from the kindness of the people around them, regularly utilizing the services of the Salvation Army and the YWCA, as well as the support of friends and new neighbours.

It was this continued kindness that inspired her to find ways to give back to her community.

“When I decided to put my name forward for political candidacy, that was the fire in my belly. That was my ‘why’,” she said. “The biggest advice I have for people is to find your ‘why’. Find your North Star. Then, you’ll always be able to say ‘yes’ with conviction.”

She decided to run for mayor just before turning 30, at which point she was met with queries about her age, her gender, her race, her background. As a result of the mounting doubt, she questioned her decisions many times, before finally deciding to follow through with it in 2014.

While Monsef came in a close second during that election, she fell on the radar at a national scale, and was elected as the Liberal Party candidate in 2015. Shortly after her arrival on the political stage, she was offered a seat at the federal cabinet table, and became a part of the first ever gender-balanced cabinet in Canadian history.

“Once I found my footing, we got some really great things done,” Monsef said. “I learned how to get things done in an institution that was designed to keep people like me out.”

> “We came to Canada with broken hearts for what we left behind, but big hopes and dreams for the opportunities that lay ahead.”
>
> –MARYAM MONSEF

During her time in this position, she was recognized alongside Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Malala Yousafzai, and Michelle Obama as one of the top 20 global influencers in gender equality. She had also established Canada’s first full department for Women and Gender Equality, and put the country on the map for gender equity.

Monsef left politics in 2021, which coincided with the time the Taliban took over leadership of Afghanistan. “A part of me broke then,” she said. “We had lost Afghanistan, and it was back in the hands of the bad guys, the ones who had oppressed my family.” Since there were no other Afghan women in cabinet positions in G7 countries, Monsef became the point person for so many fleeing the country, and navigated ways she could help in the trying time.

By the end of that year, Monsef hung up her political hat, and turned to independent consulting, focusing on offering support to women in leadership positions around the world, and advocating for the rights of women and girls in marginalized communities.

After speaking for an hour straight, Monsef concluded her talk by noting that through it all, she always came back to her ‘why’. Her North Star. It was always for the people, the community, for the girls who have voices, and especially for those who do not.

Finding one topic to explore during a presentation on someone who has done so much isn’t easy. It was difficult. But the energy that was felt in that room full of people who suddenly felt seen, heard, and inspired; that’s the North Star of the story.

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The Township of Minden Hills is seeking interest from local service organizations who wish to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Township for the collection of alcohol containers at a waste disposal site. View the complete notice on www.mindenhills.ca under the News section. When submitting a notice of interest, organizations must provide a brief summary of their organization, where funds will be utilized in the community, and preference of Waste Disposal Site for the collection location. For more information, please contact the Manager of Waste Facilities at 705-286-1260 ext. 572 or email ccosh@mindenhills.ca. All notices of interest are to be emailed to ccosh@mindenhills.ca

WINTER PARKING

From November 1st, 2023 to April 30th, 2024 overnight parking is illegal from midnight to 8:00 AM on all township roadways and parking lots. Parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in areas that interfere with snow removal operations will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner’s expense.

CULTURAL CENTRE

The Agnes Jamieson Gallery is now displaying selections from the permanent collection including new acquisitions by André Lapine ARCA (1866-1952). The Gallery is open to the public Tuesday – Sunday from 10 am – 4 pm. Admission is by donation. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca

VIRTUAL, IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person (Council Chambers) and electronic participation in accordance with the *Municipal Act*. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:
January 18 – Special Meeting of Council
January 25 – Regular Council Meeting
February 8 – Regular Council Meeting
Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link on the Township CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx. Visit our website for more information.

SNOW REMOVAL

Pushing snow across roads and streets is a safety hazard and against the law. The *Highway Traffic Act* states no person shall deposit snow or ice on a roadway without permission in writing from the road authority responsible for maintenance of the road.

STR owners make less than county thinks, says operator

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A proposed bylaw to regulate short-term rental properties in Haliburton County's four municipalities puts owners at a disadvantage to other commercial accommodation providers.

Algonquin Highlands resident Jacqueline Baptist is a short-term rental (STR) operator who rents out her family's cottage. To be able to afford that cottage, she told county council during its Jan. 10 meeting that it's necessary to rent it out through the Airbnb platform.

"I have long-term roots in Haliburton County," she said, and added that she's part of an online group that aims to show Airbnb owners how to be respectful and responsible.

She said she's concerned the amended bylaw as proposed has significant liabilities for the county.

"As drafted, the bylaw may not elicit strong compliance, be unnecessarily expensive to administer, or present risk to the municipalities," Baptist wrote in a Dec. letter to county council.

Costs to enforce the bylaw would be beyond revenue collected in a climate of decreased bookings and more competition. The proposed municipal accommodation tax (MAT) creates a lack of parity between STRs and other commercial accommodation businesses.

STR operators pay personal income tax on what's made from rentals, property tax, and the sales taxes.

That parity deficit is compounded by the requirements that STR operators buy their shoreline road allowance and to undergo a septic system inspection every three years.

There are certain security concerns as well. The bylaw's exterior signage requirement invites break-ins and theft when the property isn't occupied.

Baptist said STRs, which have become an estimated 77 per cent of accommodations in the county, contribute to the local economy and provide employment.

The accommodation tax is a revenue generator for the four lower-tier municipalities in a difficult economy.

"I know how tight money is, so that's a very important one," Baptist said, and added that property owners who cause problems should indeed be fined.

"A successful bylaw will be the one that is complied with," she said.

Baptist said the average host in Haliburton County isn't an investor or a "fat cat." The average income from rentals a year is about $9,000 for less than 50 nights rented annually. Hardly the trappings of a lucrative investment and far less than the $82,476 a year estimated by the county.

Startup costs and inspection fees are expensive hurdles for a host who is making $9,000 a year.

As per an informal social media survey, Baptist said she's found that 63 per cent of respondents offer the home they own for rent, which 10 per cent offer a separate space in the home in which they live.

"These are not people who own 15 cottages and are renting them out as a business," she said.

STR listings increased over the COVID-19 pandemic, and that resulted in a 300 per cent jump in the tourism accommodation unit capacity in the county.

"What this explosion of short-term rentals has done is made Haliburton County a much more accessible destination for people who want to visit it," Baptist said.

Property owners and county officials can agree there's a need for the STR industry to be regulated and safe, she said. The bad apple STR hosts are known by the complaints against them. Existing bylaws should be enforced against those operators.

"I can tell you, I'm not one of the bad apples and I don't like being thought of as one of them," she said.

Baptist recommended a phased-in approach to implementing STR regulation. The first year will see STRs registered and the county can monitor problem properties and enforce existing bylaws.

In the second year, public consultation will be conducted on the proposed bylaw and the county can reconsider such cumbersome aspects of it like shoreline road allowance purchases.

"Then you can move on towards implementation knowing that you're going to get a high compliance rate, which is what everybody wants," she said.

MH increases rental fee waiver amount

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Minden Hills increased the amount of rental fees that can be waived so community groups will get to keep more money in their coffers.

Candace McGuigan, the community services director, asked township council when it met Jan. 11 raise the waiver amount from $750 to a maximum of $2,000.

Any waiver requests for more than $2,000 would have to be presented to council for a decision.

"This change will minimize the requests requiring council approval and streamline the response time to user groups," she said.

The purpose of the Community Grant and Fee Waiver Program is to provide limited financial assistance to community groups and organizations within the municipality.

It's a means for the township to assist those groups with activities or special events. The waivers recognize the contributions of those groups to the well-being and growth of the community.

To streamline processes and limit the number of requests McGuigan would have to report to council, staff were directed to amend the policy to increase the maximum rental fee she's permitted to waive.

There were 13 fee waivers in 2022, McGuigan said. Ten of those waivers were under the $2,000 maximum and three were more than that amount.

In 2023, 14 fees were waived with 12 of those under $2,000 and two were more than $2,000.

"This is great because this will save everybody time," said Councillor Tammy McKelvey.

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- **The Birds & the Bees**

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Character descriptions and other important details, including how to register, can be found in the audition package, linked from the HSF home page at **www.highlandssummerfestival.on.ca**

Stakeholders, county plan for shifts in winter tourism

by **VIVIAN COLLINGS**
Times Staff

Winters in Haliburton County may never be the same.

It's a harsh reality, but those working in the tourism industry know it to be true.

For businesses dependent on snow and ice in the winter, creativity is what will push them into the future.

"This year, so many businesses and organizations have had to pivot. They thought outside the box for the past month about how they can still offer experiences in the county without snow," said Angelica Ingram, manager of tourism for Haliburton County. "And at the tourism department, we're making similar plans for the coming years, should we continue to see less snow and late ice freezing."

The county's first big snowstorm happened only this past weekend.

Some lakes still had spots of open water.

The Haliburton County Snowmobile Association has been able to build up trail bases with their groomers over the past few days.

"Certainly places that are dependent on ice fishing are most affected," said Thom Lambert, social media and content creator for the tourism and economic development department. "Of course skiing is affected too."

But that didn't stop the Jack Rabbit program from starting on-schedule on Jan. 6.

It also didn't hinder family events at Sir Sam's Ski and Ride over the public school holiday break.

"Although they couldn't open all runs, Sir Sam's ran four different kids camps over the break, and they were all full. I think they've done a phenomenal job of pivoting," Lambert explained. "They've done an amazing job of making snow the last couple of years, and they understand what families are looking for over breaks."

In the past, a later holiday break like that in 2023; with Christmas at the very beginning, would have meant more time for snow activities.

This year, we saw mostly saw green grass below our feet.

"It's been a weird December because of the late start to winter, but also with the way the school year fell, it was a busy place even without snow. We had a lot of visitors here," Ingram said. "A lot of the downtown businesses saw really good numbers over the holidays, because there was no snow, but people were still here shopping, eating out, and figuring out other things to do."

Thanks to visitors, many local businesses were booming.

"I was at Thrift Warehouse after Christmas, and the manager was saying they've had a huge boom in puzzle sales. They had days in December that were as busy as July," Ingram said.

She also highlighted the abundance of events this winter.

"When I first moved to the area 15 years ago, live music was mostly spring to fall. But now we have back to back concerts and events in January," she said.

Over at Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve, being a bit farther north benefitted them greatly.

They were able to open 200 kilometres of snowmobile trails this past weekend that don't cross water.

"The trails at the Forest are quite often among the earliest open in eastern North America which makes them very lucky," Lambert said.

It was still a long wait for them, too, said Tegan Legge, general manager of tourism and recreation at Haliburton Forest.

The had to "pivot" their focus for the past couple of months.

"It was certainly a slow start. In the meantime, guests had a great time hiking, ATVing, and visiting the Wolf Centre," Legge said. "The Wolf Centre was very busy over the holidays. We weren't pulling in as many guests as we would with snowmobiling, but the ATVers had a blast out on trails and hikers came out in droves, including an outdoor club over the New Year from the city."

Legge said all of their trails have been open since Friday, Jan. 12.

"We were sold out Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for snowmobile day passes," she said.

Unfortunately, there's no way around the lack of snow and ice for many local organizations.

"Here, we're dependent on lakes getting thick enough to stake," Lambert said. "There is no substitute to there being 200 sleds parked downtown. That might we something we have to look at in the future."

"It of course affects local restaurants and fuel providers, too," added Ingram.

But the tourism department is confident the county can and will adapt.

"The reality is, everything about climate change says winters are getting shorter, but I'm confident. We have amazingly creative operators in the county," Lambert said.

One of the most important aspects is to support winter weather-dependent businesses in any and every way; all of us, as a community.

Small acts go a long way when we do them collectively.

Some ways to offer support:

- Share posts, activities, and events on social media
- Shop locally
- Have a "staycation" at local accommodations
- Attend local events
- Eat out
- Buy ski and snowmobile passes

Visit myhaliburtonhighlands.com/whats-happening for a calendar of events for Haliburton County to stay updated on this winter's events.

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Cuts and bruises

"It is literally impossible to be a woman."

And so begins the monologue delivered by America Ferrara in the movie *Barbie*, that graced theatres this past summer, and rattled hearts, bones, and the fragile egos of some select men who have been cruising down easy street all their lives.

I have taken pride in identifying as a woman my whole life. And I am one of the lucky ones. I was raised in a household where the glass ceiling had a skylight built into it by my parents. They were the first to crack the window and tell me I could fly as far as I wanted.

And as I sat in the sticky heat of the Fish Hatchery this past week while Maryam Monsef spoke for an hour about her journey as a Muslim, an Afghan, a woman in politics, I realized that it doesn't matter if that glass ceiling has a crack. It's still there.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

"Even if you are in the process of breaking a glass ceiling," she said, "there will certainly be cuts. There will always be bruises."

As I navigate this world, raising two young girls and staying up at night wondering what their future will hold, sometimes it seems like there is progress.

Nowadays, we have a professional women's hockey league. As I watched the women don their helmets – preparing their armour for not just a game, but to break through the glass ceiling - I thought about how myself, one of the only girls on a local team growing up, was sent to get changed in a broom closet, next to the furnace. That inner-child saw those women skate onto the ice, and watched as people around the bar swiveled in their seats to watch these heroes play. Finally.

And then, the bartender changed the channel to showcase an NHL game instead. Two American teams. Apparently more important than the homegrown women who just graced the screen.

When *Barbie* came out this past summer, I listened to the conversations that sprouted around it. The dialogue that evoked emotions in all of us, that made us, as women, feel seen, heard, validated, understood. Finally.

"You are so beautiful, and so smart, and it kills me that you don›t think you›re good enough. Like, we have to always be extraordinary, but somehow we›re always doing it wrong."

And then, we have an awards show that was tuned into around the world, and the host casually saying that the movie is based solely on "a plastic doll with big boobies."

One step forward, 100 steps back.

It is literally impossible to be a woman.

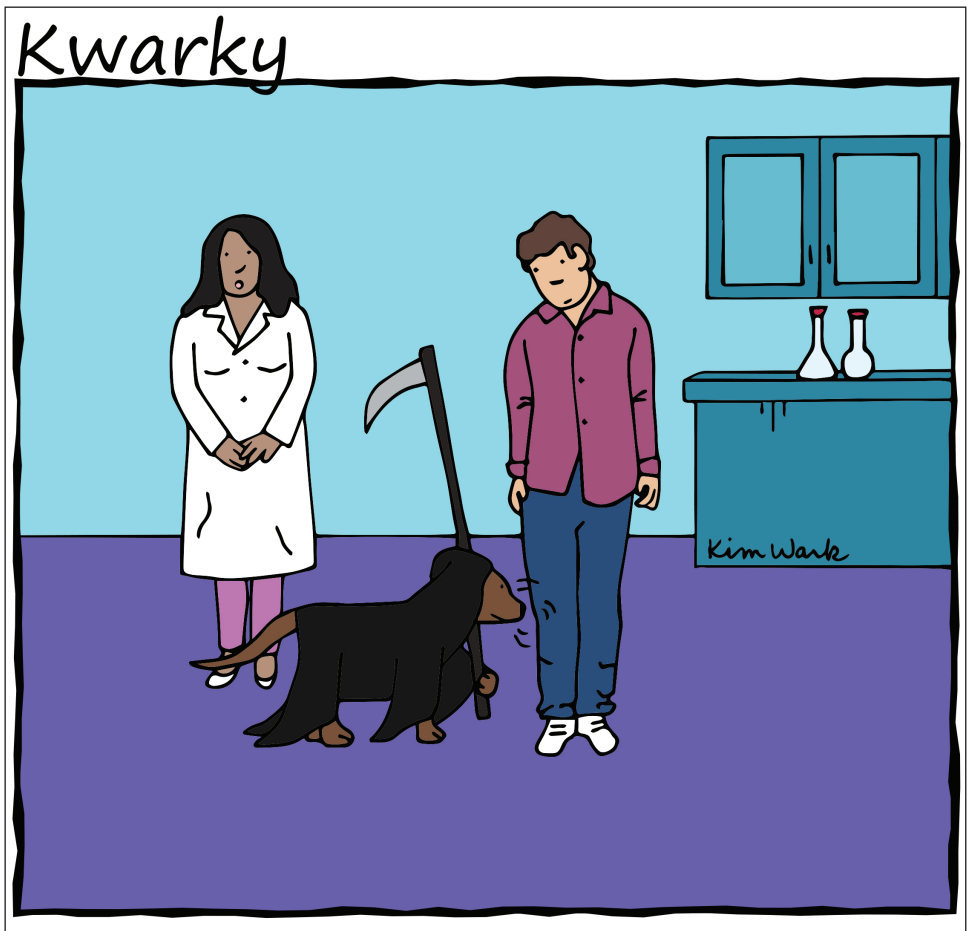
As I watched Monsef speak, I watched the fire burn in her soul. She spoke of her immigration story. Her arrival in Canada. Her treatment in politics. Her desire to make her community, her country, her world, a better place.

But as a woman, so often, that glass ceiling is a mirage. Even if the window is cracked, it's a trap.

Monsef spoke about how resilience in a woman has a tipping point. There is only so much we can withstand before we throw in the towel. We can only be shoved in a corner, spoken over, defeated so many times. Because it is literally impossible to be a woman.

But when we feel this way, my hope is that we join together. We lift one another up, we pull out of the shadows, we find a seat at the table, we use our voices to not only speak, but to shout, sing, and scream from the rooftops what we deserve.

Because while we may be cut and bruised from smashing through that glass ceiling, once the glass is cleared, we can all fly free. Finally.



"Max is our disease-detecting service dog."

A dummy's guide to skijoring

IF YOU think that we live in an advanced society, consider the fact that when it comes to snow removal, we have chosen the shovel as our primary means. This is especially vexing to me, since we live in a time when we have perfected the flamethrower.

But life is not all bad.

For instance, someone also invented skijoring, which my dictionary defines as a sport that features a person on skis is being towed by a dog, horse, other animal, or vehicle.

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

I'm not certain, but I believe skijoring means "lazy skier" in Swedish.

This is probably the main reason why the sport interests me, though not enough to actually try.

Which is a bit of a shame, since I have all the things required for skijoring – a dog with a talent for pulling on a lead, and a thrift shop or two within easy reach that sell used skis. Most importantly, I have the right mental attitude. You see, I have no problem letting other creatures do all the work.

Admittedly, I know very little about the sport. But my guess is that it was invented when a Scandinavian dog walker wore boots with lousy treads. And, since winters are long there, it caught on.

I will admit, I am most interested in the "other animal" reference. Because, presumably, the choice of animal that pulls you makes a difference.

For instance, if you plan on being towed by a team of hamsters, you better be pretty good at waxing skis. On the other hand, if you choose a moose as your main means of propulsion, you are hopefully adept at dodging trees. Also, you want to pray it doesn't stop abruptly.

Which brings me to another point. It seems to me, in a way skijoring is kind of like dogsledding or driving on the 401 – at least as far as the view ahead of you is concerned. So, it shouldn't be too hard to get used to.

I also imagine that it is probably a lot of fun too – and a great way to bond with your dog. My only issue is that my dog would skijor me all the way to the nearest dog park every time. And, if there was open water with mallards in it, I'd soon be learning how to water ski as well.

Again, I know nothing about the sport at all, but I also suspect that you could probably use the old stick and carrot method to ensure your dog, moose, hamster, or other animal speed up or slow down, and that could provide some level of control.

As far as my dog Rosie is concerned, all I would have to do is point her in the direction of the nearest squirrel and I could get her to hit 100 kilometre per hour. This would be an exhilarating experience, although at some point, I'd have to figure out how to get down from the tree.

Despite these pitfalls, I suspect learning to work as a team with your animal is half the fun of skijoring. And I also imagine that after a while you would get really good at pooping and scooping while travelling 50 kilometres per hour.

Until then, however, other people can skijor. But don't worry, I'll be pulling for you. Just not in the way you'd like.

InOtherWords

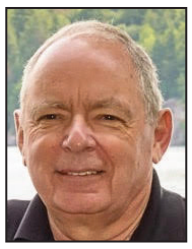
Columns and Letters to the Editor

The importance of snow

MANY FOLKS are cheering the recent arrival of snow that has been missing for most of this unusual winter.

Lack of snow in October, November and December has been tough on businesses that rely on winter activity spending. Ski hills, snowmobile services, restaurants, confectionary and grocery stores and others all have been hurt by the snowless first half of winter.

Some regional tourism officials estimate financial losses in the millions of dollars because of the lack of snow. So, the recent snowfalls finally have given them reason to cheer.



JIM POLING SR.
From Shaman's Rock

Plants and animals can't cheer, but if they could their voices would be loud and happy.

We humans often see winter as a time pretty much devoid of life. Bears and some other animals are hibernating; many birds have gone south. However, unseen by us are life activities beneath the snow. Life that is preserved by the snow.

A snow pack of just a few inches can stabilize soil temperatures, providing just enough warmth to keep snakes, bugs and small animals like voles and mice from freezing. The snow also gives them some protection from predators.

Some plants continue to be active beneath the winter snow. It insulates their root systems from extreme cold, while mosses, fungi and even flowers continue to function and even germinate beneath the snow.

Without snow, life becomes more difficult for animals that don't hibernate or go south.

The lynx with its snowshoe-like paws has a harder time pursuing prey. Others, like some hares whose coats turn white when snow arrives, are more exposed to predators.

Wolverines, which have been making a bit of a comeback in Ontario, do not reproduce well in the absence of snow. Snow cover in areas where they reproduce has been diminishing.

Some Rocky Mountain regions are said to have two fewer weeks of snow cover than 50 years ago. One study has found that the Alps in Europe could lose as much as 70 per cent of its snow cover by 2100.

These changes are increasing scientific interest in winter ecology, the study of relationships between living things and their winter environment, Scientists studying climate change are documenting how less snow is creating changes in the global environment.

They are concerned that a warming planet with less snow and ice is forcing some plants and animals to move from regions they have occupied for centuries. For instance, areas with less annual snow melt could become unsuitable for growing food. Animals like the wolverine could abandon areas where less snow has reduced their ability to survive and reproduce.

Researchers are finding that earlier spring melting, and less of it, might be a reason why we are seeing more severe forest wildfires. Some research has found that landscapes burned by wildfires had less water from snowmelt than unburned areas. And, snow melted nine days earlier in burned areas compared with unburned areas.

There is a lot of talk and worry about melting glaciers, but the effects of disappearing glaciers are tiny compared to shrinking snow packs. Snow holds huge amounts of moisture that is released slowly as temperatures rise, nourishing plants as they need it.

Melting snow also becomes a natural reservoir system providing water for human communities. For instance, one-third of the water used by California cities and farmland comes from melted snowpacks.

Perhaps the most important factor of snow is that it helps regulate the temperature of an increasingly warming planet.

Snow is highly reflective, sending the sun's radiation back into the atmosphere instead of into the ground where it increases the earth's temperature.

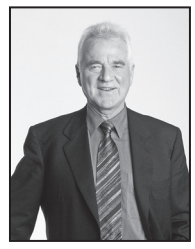
Scientists say that new snow cover can reflect up to 90 per cent of the sun's radiation back into the atmosphere. Sea ice reflects only roughly 60 per cent back to the sky, land without snow 10 to 20 percent and open ocean a mere six per cent.

So like it or hate it, winter's snow is a critically important part of our world. We can live without the inconveniences it brings, and even the pleasures of winter recreations. But we cannot live without the water it provides to maintain our health and grow the food we need to survive.

Should Canada adopt Argentina's chainsaw approach?

LAST MONTH, voters in Argentina elected as their new President a political outsider who promised to inflict painful shock therapy to the nation's stagnant economy and who carried a chainsaw to campaign rallies as a dramatic symbol of his plan to slash the size of government.

Javier Milei was supported by fed-up voters who were tired of decades of government mismanagement and economic interference that resulted in growing poverty, out-of-control debt, and sky-high inflation running at about 120 per cent.



FRANK STRONACH
Principles

Last week, on his very first day in office, the gruff, straight-shooting Milei made good on his promise to take a chainsaw to the government bureaucracy by cutting the number of government ministries in half, from 18 to 9.

As part of his "chainsaw plan" to shrink the size of government and reduce the country's suffocating bureaucracy, Milei also wants to make massive cuts to government spending during his first year in office that total about 15 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or tens of billions of dollars.

Could the same scenario ever take place here in Canada one day?

A growing number of Canadians worry that our country is on a fast track to becoming Argentina of the North on account of our own mushrooming debt and gorilla-sized government bureaucracy that keeps getting larger.

But the key difference is that Argentina was left with little choice but to enact extreme measures. Canada, however, still has time to get our spending under control, bring down our debt, and reduce the size of our bloated bureaucracy.

During the past year I've advocated for the adoption of a new national Canadian Economic Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. One of the key principles in the economic charter is a gradual reduction of government spending amounting to 5 per cent per year over a 10-year period.

Instead of Argentina's brutal chainsaw approach, the method spelled out in the economic charter would be measured and would cause the least amount of disruption possible while still bringing down spending and reducing the size of our government.

The reduction would be achieved by imposing an immediate freeze on the hiring of any new government workers, as well as implementing a policy of not replacing employees who leave or retire.

But for this plan to work, we have to start downsizing now – not ten years from today.

The build-up of government bureaucracy is already clogging up the arteries of commerce and eroding Canadian living standards – and it will only grow worse in the years ahead.

The gradual reductions I've proposed to government spending over the period of a decade are doable, realistic and would cause minimal disruption.

But if we keep running deficits, racking up debt and expanding our government bureaucracy, we'll be left with no other choice than the same sort of desperate measures that Argentina is taking.

Argentina didn't become an economic basket case overnight – they got to this point after two decades of disastrous economic policies and reckless government spending.

If we don't sort out our country's financial affairs now, then a few years down the road we'll be the ones taking a chainsaw to our overgrown bureaucracy – and it will be a lot messier and a lot more painful.

To learn more about the economic charter and how it could generate economic growth and prosperity, email me at info@economiccharter.ca. Or to learn more about the economic charter, visit: www.economiccharter.ca.

Frank Stronach is the founder of Magna International Inc., one of Canada's largest global companies, and was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame.
fstronachlpc@gmail.com

HCPL's Book of the Week

It's the summer of 2003 and thirteen-year-old astronomer Noah Cooper has just moved to Queensport, a small town with a sky full of stars. There he meets Tara Dhillon, a lonely girl and aspiring filmmaker. When the two team up to produce an astronomy movie and enter a film contest, they discover a secret plan to turn their rural hamlet into a huge subdivision.

Noah and Tara must use their unique skills to identify the culprits who plan on paving over the historic county — and try to save the infinite beauty of the stars.

Recommended for ages 9 to 12, *A Bucket of Stars* by Suri Rosen is nominated for the 2024 Red Maple Award™. Available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library .

Minden Memories

St Paul's Anglican Church in the winter time. The building was one of the original churches in Minden, and still stands today on Invergordon Street, despite years of flooding. /photo submitted by the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

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Creative Collaborations
When: Tuesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church. 617 Mountain Street
Share your skills. Learn new skills. Bring your own project or work on the featured project. Beginners Welcome. Contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for details.

Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays, at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Cribbage and Euchre
When: Tuesdays at 2 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St.
Please join us Tuesdays for cribbage and Euchre at St. George's Anglican Church. With funding from the Government of Ontario. Please contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for more information.

Super Cash Calendar Draws
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m. January until October.
Where: Haliburton Legion
Three tickets pulled per night. First ticket winner receives $100, second ticket $200, and third ticket $500. Winners will be posted every month on www.haliburtonlions.com. Public is welcome to attend the draws at the Lions meetings.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 & 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw at the Coboconk Legion. 5 spins for $10. The first 4 rounds are for highest and lowest score with 2 winners per round. The last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

Wilberforce Heritage Guild Annual Meeting
When: Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Where: Wilberforce Red Cross Museum
The Wilberforce Heritage Guild invites you to attend our 2024 Annual Meeting. Contact Barb Schofield at 705-448-2598 or wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Travel for Seniors
When: Jan. 24, 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St.
Join Linda Coneybeare for a free information session. This will cover helpful topics such as new travel rules, post-Covid travel, insurance needs, types of travel, and mobility issues.

Ladies Auxiliary Luncheon
When: Jan. 26, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 & 35
Please join us for a luncheon prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary. The cost is $13 to attend. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

Talking and listening

MY BROTHER has digitized 457 letters that he wrote and received over three plus years in the late 1960s when he was preparing to and served with CUSO (Canadian University Students Overseas) in Kenya. The rationale was to capture the Africa of that day for the benefit of his grandchildren, but the motive – and the great gift – was to capture our young adult life in that time.

The letters between us are informatively and distressingly candid. He is a year older than I, and we were by necessity each other's companions on the Alberta farm where we were raised. We both lived for eight months in Toronto while he was finishing and I was starting a post-grad degree. Our social lives intertwined significantly; his girlfriend of the time was apparently a close friend of mine. I say 'apparently' because, to my chagrin, I could not remember her, even when he sent a photo. (I was – still am – distressed about what that says about me.) There were complexities; his ex-roomie of the time was hot on me (unreciprocated) and married my brother's girlfriend when she became an ex. (A recent visit included me chatting with – some would say interrogating -- the ex-roomie about when/why their marriage ended, and my brother and me having a long coffee meeting with the ex-girlfriend, which I think laid to rest concerns he may have had about roads not taken – although she's lovely. But that's a story for another place.)

FAY MARTIN
Poke, Peel, Pair, Ponder

What I take from the letters is the place of stories in our lives as we age. From several perspectives: that of the elders whose stories they are, the adult children or their generation whom we need to understand us accurately as we become dependent on them, and our grandchildren and their generation to whom we owe some strand of historical perspective.

First, the perspective of the elder: When the busyness of life slows down, there is time to think about the life one has had. Margaret Lawrence wrote *The Stone Angel*, published 1964, about Hagar at 90 ruminating, not kindly, about her life. I remember thinking, when I read it as a much younger woman, that I would be nicer in my old age. I do think there is a need as we age to string the specifics of our life into some kind of pattern that makes sense and gives meaning to our time on earth. The opportunity to gather the self into a thoughtfully-coloured persona, to embrace the better (without fearing that your pride will be appropriately punished) and forgive the worse and ponder the grout that pulls the pieces together, has value.

Regarding adult children: memoir about caregiving seems to be the medium of choice for adult children acknowledging the power of elders' stories. Caregiving of the visiting/respite variety creates time and space for talking. There is also motivation for listening: when the tick-tock of mortality makes itself heard -- the end is near the end is near – we (maybe) make listening a priority. There is also a payoff for the adult children: by understanding from whence they came, the personalities and realities of their forebears, they better understand themselves.

It's nature's gift that aging chews holes in the censor system. A lot more that could be said is said. Stuff slips through without an 'oops' or mouths covered in mock shame. The elder has a diminishing need, as tick-tock becomes audible, to keep secrets, to protect the sacred cows of family lore, to keep the sainted saints and the disgraced in their cupboards. Censorship is kicked to the curb. The curtain falls away and the real person stands (relatively) naked.

As the elder emerges in context, the stories gain gusto. The tropes of family gatherings are embellished with technicolour detail, the hidden gems are disclosed, the cause and effect of decisions are exposed, the limits of self-determination and the role of fate and happenstance become evident. This has the potential of solace and instruction for adults still immersed in their busy, busy lives.

For the grandchildren? Mine need to be a bit older before I'm comfortable sharing the letters with them – although perhaps their angst about where they fit on the gender spectrum would be assuaged by their elders' confusion and ineptitude dealing with the gender we unambiguously owned. My understanding of their world perspective is so inadequate that I cannot predict what they would make of us. Maybe when they're in their mid-twenties, if we're still around …

But mostly I think it's a pity we don't write letters anymore.

Dove love

Guenter Horst of Minden snapped this picture of a resting mourning dove after a large snowfall hit the community this past weekend.
/Photo submitted by Guenter Horst

April 2023 Year in Review

Cassie Thomas and her mother, Ginger Kulas, taught the half-day session on Ukrainian Easter Egg decorating on April 1. In this tradition, all imagery, colours, and shapes represent different stories and meanings. /EMILY STONEHOUSE

The most popular river levels reference guide in Minden Hills: the four chairs on Gull River. /EMILY STONEHOUSE

The Minden Times will be splitting up their 2023 Year in Review into weekly segments. Please see next week's Times for coverage from July to September, 2023.

Minden ER closing June 1

The Minden emergency room doors will be closing permanently on June 1, 2023. As of that date, all emergency services will be operating out of the Haliburton Hospital. "This is really related to our health human resource crisis," said Carolyn Plummer, President and CEO of Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS). "It is a global health human resource crisis, it's been ongoing for quite some time, and it has meant a shortage of both nursing and medical staff." Plummer emphasized that this closure is based solely on staffing rather than funding; recruitment is the persistent struggle looming over most rural communities.

Changing the narrative on housing

Despite torrential downpour and flickering lights, the Minden Community Centre was packed on April 5 for the 2023 Haliburton County Housing Summit, presented by Places for People. "I want to be clear that we are focused on appropriate housing today," said Fay Martin, vice-president of Places for People, "that's our focus: appropriate homes for all." Martin knows that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to housing. Though she did note that the wheels are in motion. "I promised those gathered that this was the beginning of a process, not simply an event," she said.

Council speaks out about ER closure

Minden council is not on board for the Minden emergency room closure, scheduled for June 1 2023, at which point all emergency services in the county would be permanently relocated to the Haliburton site. The news was shared with elected politicians just before it broke publicly via a press release. "Minden council is going to stand by the community, and we are going to fight this," mayor Bob Carter shared with the *Times*, shortly after the news went live.

New Minden business welcomes all

A space to feel seen, a space to feel supported, a space to feel like the best version of yourself. That's the dream for mother/daughter business partners Mary and Vanessa Douglas. "We want people to know that you don't have to go to a city to shop and feel beautiful," said Mary. The co-owners opened their new shop, Mostly Her, on Bobcaygeon Road in Minden on April 5. The shop is warm, welcoming, and filled with pops of colour from wall-to-wall. Framed on their desk, is the mission statement for the business. It reads: "Our mission at Mostly Her is to provide our clients with high quality, affordable intimate apparel while providing a safe, non-judgmental place."

A new chapter for Occurrence owners

It's the end of an era for Minden locals Brigitte Gall and Michael Bainbridge as they head off to pursue a new adventure in Ottawa. Bainbridge was recently offered the position of assistant collections manager for mineralogy at the Canadian Museum of Nature. The unique job opportunity meant that the couple and their children will be relocating to a new community. "We are so excited that Michael got his dream job," Gall shared with the *Times*, "but there are mixed feelings about leaving our little community for sure."

Emery Steele of Minden decorates an Easter Cookie at Abbey Garden's annual Easter at the Gardens on April 8. The event saw hundreds of children and their families on the sunny spring day. /EMILY STONEHOUSE

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May 2023 Year in Review

Minden Doctors speak out

The Minden ER physicians have spoken. “This shouldn’t have happened now,” said Dr. Bruno Helt of the Minden ER during a private media interview. “In terms of the physician resources in Minden, we have been fully staffed, without need for any outside support, for more than 25 years.” He noted that the first time they required assistance was in April of this year, where they needed support from Health Force Ontario .“The Minden Hospital would never have closed this summer because we didn’t have enough physicians to cover.” Helt shared that if “worse came to worst”, for those few gaps in the schedule that could not be covered by Health Force Ontario, he, or others in the Minden group. “We were sufficiently staffed to get us to the end of September.”

Multiple fires force county-wide ban

A large bush fire took shape in Dorset on May 15, 2023. “It started around Highway 35, and threatened the Dorset Tower, as well as other locations in the area,” said Mike French, the Fire Chief for Algonquin Highlands. French shared that there were five stations involved in fighting the flames, including two from Lake of Bays. The fire started small, but grew quickly. “People don’t realize how unbelievably dry it is,” said French, sharing that the fire was spreading at three metres per minute, which is approximately the length of a football field within 30 minutes. The total fire size was five hectares, with the exact cause still under investigation. There were no injuries during the fire, and the departments managed to contain the fire throughout the evening of May 15.

County adopts strategy for economic growth

Haliburton County has clearer direction toward spurring economic development in the region. Scott Ovell, the county’s director of economic development, presented the final draft of the county’s Economic Development Strategy during county council. The document lays a foundation for identifying development priorities until 2026. The strategy’s implementation will foster a vision for economic development in the county. It identifies five development avenues: the creation of business by encouraging entrepreneurship; gaps in local products and services that can be filled through attracting business; economic sustainability that can be achieved with supports for all economic sectors; investment in local workforce development; and the importance of proactive communications.

Minden Hills firefighter Michael Xerri helps Tasha Reid, 6, use a fire hose during a demonstration to mark First Responders Day on Monday, May 1. The open house was a part of a county-wide initiative to celebrate first responders. /ADAM FRISK

NDP supports Minden ER

“We’re here today to talk about an incredible community effort underway to save the Minden Emergency Room,” shared Marit Styles, the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP) and the leader of the Opposition when she came to Minden on May 25 to speak with concerned citizens. “Every single day, we get stronger, you keep building and you keep pushing back and you do not give up,” she told the crowd. “Even if they do decide to close on June 1, that battle does not end on June 1, we keep building, we keep spreading the message.”

A public meeting was held at the Minden Community Centre, where hundreds of concerned citizens gathered to voice their dismay of the recent announcement regarding the closure of the Minden ER. /VIVIAN COLLINGS

Minden water levels noticeably high

Forecasts are predicting up to 60 mm of rainfall, resulting in soft shoulders and spillage around the river. The MNRF has formally issued a flood watch bulletin for the Gull River Watershed. This means that “potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses and municipalities.” Folks who have experienced flooding in the past are recommended to prepare for a situation in which flooding could occur again; though it is not necessarily inevitable. There are three major steps to flood analysis communications: flood outlook, flood watch, and finally, a formal flood warning.

Community members started getting the beds ready on May 9 for the Community Garden at the Minden Fairgrounds. /photo submitted

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June 2023 Year in Review

National Indigenous History Month in the Haliburton Highlands

The month of June has been identified as National Indigenous History Month, with National Indigenous People's Day falling on June 21, to tie in with the summer solstice.

The date was put in place by the federal government in 2017, and has been recognized nationally ever since. According to www.native-land.ca, Haliburton County sits on the traditional territory of the Anishinabaweki and the Mississauga Nations.

Kawartha North Family Health Team clears the air

On Friday June 9, a room of well over 100 people sat on plastic chairs in the Minden Community Centre waiting for the one thing they've been looking for since the announcement of the Minden Emergency Department (ED) on April 20: answers. But these weren't clear-cut answers from the HHHS Board or local politicians. They were answers from the executive director of the Kawartha North Family Health Team (KNFHT), Marina Hodson. The information session was designed to unpack a proposal put forward by the KNFHT for the opening of an urgent care clinic, housed in the former Minden ED site.

Health service AGM came up short, say community groups

Concerned citizen groups believe the Haliburton Highlands Health Services annual general meeting was a missed opportunity to engage the public. The health service met in a virtual AGM on June 22. "Once again, HHHS has chosen to silence the community and evade their responsibility to the people of Minden," said Patrick Porzuczek of the group Minden Matters.

Nearly 100 people gathered outside the Minden ER on May 31 with candles to thank the staff for their years of hard work and dedication. The ER department was locked as of midnight on June 1. /EMILY STONEHOUSE

"The lack of transparency and meaningful community involvement demonstrated during the meeting continues to raise serious questions about the board's commitment to serving the best interests of the entire community it claims to represent."

MHCC plans Bateman exhibit

Renowned Canadian visual artists are coming to Minden Hills this summer.

The Bateman Family: A Sense of Place will be an exhibit at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre this summer from July 6 to Sept. 2. And patriarch, Robert Bateman, one of Canada's most celebrated realist painters on par, according to many people, with the Group of Seven, will open with exhibit with his children, accomplished artists in their own right.

The Minden Times will be splitting up their 2023 Year in Review into weekly segments. Please see next week's Times for coverage from July to September, 2023.

Below, Pockets the Clown face-paints Ava Kulas while Haleigh Gallagher looks on.

Horses pictured during the Haliburton County Fair horse pull competition.

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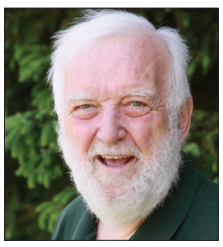
Health by stealth

Earlier in 2023, Ontario Premiere Doug Ford said, "...when you access health care in Ontario you will only need your health card, not your credit card." What wasn't said in this cute turn of phrase was that there are a number of hidden caveats to that reassurance.

The statement was part of a broader announcement about increased provincial funding for for-profit clinics. The expansion of clinics outside the health care system was being offered as one way to reduce the backlog of medical procedures that has grown extensively, aggravated by the year or more freeze resulting from the shutdown during the COVID-19 crisis.



JACK BREZINA
Point of View

It sounds like an easy and quick way to get the system back in balance. Others, yours truly included, see the announcement as a way to introduce even more two-tier medicine into the medical system of the province. Health by stealth if you will. Large corporate and medical agencies were quick to respond and the money is starting to flow into these for profit entities. Not only are provincial funds backing these enterprises, but, they are recruiting doctors and nurses from the public system to provide the expertise needed to deliver the services. Ontario, like all regions in Canada, is experiencing medical personnel shortages.

Retirements, pandemic burnout and other factors have seen the drop in professionals within the system. This situation was further aggravated by the one per cent cap imposed on nursing contracts for the past three years. An arbiter has overturned that wage cap and earlier this year restored reasonable increases for nurses. Even with that change, public hospitals still have trouble attracting nursing staff. Meanwhile agencies offer to fill the gap with contract nurses and charge hospitals up to double what they would be paying for a staff nurse. These agencies also drain the public system of nurses.

Imagine how demoralizing it must be for hospital staff nurses to work beside a contract nurse, familiarizing the hired staff with local routines and procedures while the temp is being paid at a much higher rate. And part of the higher rate is going to private companies' bottom lines. This is not the health care system we grew up with and will certainly not strength the public system in the long run.

The extra costs of those nurses, or the additional charges in the private clinics, will not be charged to the patients at the time of receiving the service. But we will all be paying for it through our provincial taxes.

If the province expects hospitals to find money in their budgets to fund contract nurses, then it is time for the health ministry to tap into the huge surplus the province has been sitting on and ensure that nurses and all medical professionals in hospitals receive a wage competitive with what is offered in the private sector.

Minden and area continues to be awash with yellow signs pleading for the reopening of our emergency department. Scattered among those are signs calling for a halt to the privatization of the public health care system. Both crusades are important, and we should continue to fight just as hard for the continuation of the public system as we are for the emergency department. Otherwise, we will witness the slow withering away of our public system to the point where we will have nothing left. When that happens, we will be pulling out our credit cards before showing our health cards.

Lightfoot aims to bring people together

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

As the medley of sleet and ice falls from the skies, a fire crackles while I dial Terra Lightfoot's phone number.

She's in Seattle at the time of the call; exploring hiking trails, and preparing for her upcoming shows. "This is a great time to chat," she said eagerly, as she picked up the phone.

Hailing originally from Waterdown, Ontario, Lightfoot went to attend McMaster University. The Juno-nominated musician called Hamilton home until the pandemic hit in early 2020. That's when she made the life-changing decision to move to the Haliburton Highlands. When asked if she was familiar with the area, Lightfoot laughed. "Absolutely, not at all," she said. "But we found the perfect property, and we couldn't be happier."

She made her debut in the county with a show at the Haliburton Legion last January, "and I kind of wanted to make that an annual thing," she said, in light of the success for the 2023 sold-out show to the local crowd. Lightfoot observed that the "winter blues" are all too real this time of year, so putting on a show where people can get up and dance has certain healing powers.

It was this mind-set that sparked Lightfoot's newest album, *Healing Power*, which was released in October of 2023. "These are songs that were all written just within a few kilometers of the local legion," she said.

Her upcoming performance on Jan. 27 at the Haliburton Legion will feature songs from the new album, as well as a smattering of some classics that Lightfoot has performed around the world.

Presented by the Haliburton County Folk Society, the concert will feature Rob Radford on drums and vocals, Eli Abrams on bass, and of course, Lightfoot on guitar and vocals. Her guitar style has been compared to that of Van Morrison and John Fogerty, with her raspy vocals echoing the likes of Joan Jett or Janis Joplin. "We inhabit the rock and roll world, the folk world, and the blues world," Lightfoot mused, when asked about her style.

While the core of the concert is rock and roll, the heart lies in the desire Lightfoot has to bring people together. "I think that music has the distinct ability to heal," she said, "I've traveled around the world playing music, and the commonality I see is that everyone usually feels a little bit better after attending a concert. Music brings people together."

Tickets are available for the Lightfoot concert via the Haliburton Folk Society website, at www.haliburtonfolk.com. Tickets were sold out last year, so Lightfoot encourages folks to purchase in advance. The show opener is Christina Hutt, who plays country, blues, and soul music; which compliments Lightfoot's style nicely.

Lightfoot said the concert is for all ages, and she looks forward to bringing everyone together. "I've seen everyone from kids to 90-year-olds on the dance floor," she said. "Let's shake those winter blues away together."

GET IT online
www.mindentimes.ca

Haliburton COUNTY FOLK SOCIETY
TERRA LIGHTFOOT
Opener: Christina Hutt
Saturday January 27, 2024 7:30pm
Royal Canadian Legion, Br. 129 - Haliburton
Tickets $45, $40 for HCFS members & students, $50 at door, youth / children 18 & under free (Must order free tickets online)
Tickets online: www.haliburtonfolk.com
A project of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative
Thanks to Heritage Canada for their support

Photo arts program wraps it up

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

Erica Olavario, centre, stands with her classmates from the photo arts program at Haliburton School of Art + Design. The group is the last graduating class from the program, as it has been cancelled due to low enrollment moving forward. /Photo submitted by Ken Chou

The Haliburton School of Art and Design (HSA+D) is nestled in the heart of Haliburton County, and attracts a diverse range of artists from around the world.

Erica Olavario is one such student.

Olavario recently finished her time at HSA+D with the student show "Wrap It Up" on Dec. 16. "This exhibition was a labour of love, not only to showcase our individual artistic journeys but also to honor the incredible value the program holds for us as budding artists and creators," said Olaviario. "Unfortunately, our group represents the final cohort of Photo Arts students at HSA+D."

The class was told that there was not enough interest in the program moving forward, and that many photographers are shifting gears to focus on the digital world. Fleming College was contacted to confirm this statement, but did not respond at the time of publication.

Despite learning of the cancellation early in the semester, Olavario and her classmates made the most of the unique program during her semester in the county, noting that each student in the small class brought different interests, skills, and ideas to the table.

Olavario originally came to the college through the integrated design program. She then began to explore the concept of storytelling through her images, which directed her towards wrapping up her diploma with the photo arts certificate. "I was intrigued by the mix of analog and digital photography," she said. "While I've mostly dealt with digital colored photos, there's something about black-and-white analog shots that resonates with the stories I want to convey."

And to Olavario, her time at HSA+D was truly all about the stories. While a small class size may seem like a downside to some, for the photo arts students, it was a breath of fresh air.

"We all have different photography styles in class," she said, noting that while she leans into photojournalism and portraits, her classmates took interest in other areas; such as wildlife, landscapes, agriculture, and photo manipulation. "This diverse spectrum allows me to see things from different perspectives and learn from them," she said.

While Olavario reflected on her time in the county, she couldn't help but note that the cancellation of the photo arts program is disheartening, not just for her, but for her fellow artists as well. "It's disappointing because the program held so much promise, and every individual in our class had incredible potential,"she said. "I believe we could have expanded our horizons with more experiences and learning opportunities."

The young students hope that Fleming can revamp the program in some capacity, offering it to future photographers, and continuing to celebrate the photography industry.

In the meantime, Olavario is eager to jump into the real world with the knowledge and skills that she learned from the program. "I got really into the whole process of developing and printing analog photos. I want to explore more of that," she said. "Also, I want to keep telling stories through moving and still images, focusing on my culture and the diaspora."

While the line may be ending for the photo arts program at HSA+D, one thing is for sure: the stories won't stop.

Aging Together as Community update

Registration for in person attendance at our Aging Together as Community Conference at Pinestone Resort on Jan. 27 is now closed.

You can still enjoy our amazing roster of speakers and participate in this amazing community conversation on ZOOM.

To register for Zoom and to get on our WAIT LIST to attend in person please email us at agingtogetherhc@gmail.com

Submitted by Bonnie Roe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 15, 2024

The public is invited to a Public Information Centre (PIC) on the Haliburton Floodplain Mapping Project which is a Joint Initiative by the County of Haliburton, Ganaraska Conservation and Kawartha Conservation. The project is being funded in part by Natural Resources Canada's Flood Hazard Identification & Mapping Program (FHIMP).

Aiming to strengthen community resilience and safety, the County of Haliburton, in collaboration with the two conservation authorities, has initiated a vital study focused on preparing floodplain mapping for the Gull River and Burnt River systems. This initiative primarily seeks to enhance our understanding of flood risks within the County and to make our communities more resilient to flood risks.

Floodplain mapping plays a crucial role in guiding decisions related to safeguarding people and properties from natural hazards.

We cordially invite residents and other interested community members to a Public Information Centre. Here, attendees will have the opportunity to examine the study area, learn about how flood hazards are mapped, and engage in discussions with members of the project team. The community's participation in this event is highly encouraged. Final deliverables for this project are anticipated to be available this March.

The PIC is scheduled for Monday, January 29th, 2024, from 4:00pm to 8:00pm at the Minden Community Centre, located at 55 Parkside Street, Minden, ON, and will be held in Room 2.

For more information, please contact: Steve Stone, Director of Planning for the County of Haliburton, 11 Newcastle Street, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0, Phone: 705-286-1333 ext. 222

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The sky's the limit with Coach V

by **BRITNEY PAGLIUCA**
Times Staff

A welcoming smile from Coach V, standing outside of the Norland School Hall, where Open Sky Jiu Jitsu runs its youth and adult classes. This photo was taken after a summer "grading day", where Coach V cooked Filipino BBQ to celebrate. /photo submitted

In a world where women are often overlooked in the martial arts industry, one remarkable woman is breaking barriers and making a name for herself as the driving force behind a thriving Jiu Jitsu academy in Norland. Open Sky Jiu Jitsu, operating since 2022, is the only female-run martial arts academy in the county. "A rare occurrence, even in Toronto," Coach V said.

Veronica Abrenica, known as Coach V to her students, began teaching Jiu Jitsu soon after she moved to Minden in 2021. "I came to this community knowing that I wanted to build something," she said, "but at that time I didn't know what it would look like."

In her Minden studio apartment, which she had originally planned to use as a space for her art practice, Abrenica reconnected with her passion for Jiu Jitsu – an interest that grew from practicing the art on her own for ten years and instructing at an academy in the GTA.

It was in this apartment that the idea of opening her own academy was born, and where she taught her first three students, Ava Joseph, Mykola Danilko, and Sophia Danilko.

Just as Abrenica started to feel comfortable teaching in her new space, she was told that she needed to find a new place to live. "It was the worst news I had ever received," she said, "but my three students were enough to keep me going and gave me the drive to find another space."

Abrenica says that this forced change of plans served as a reminder that nothing ever truly belongs to you. But hardships only make us stronger, and changes lead to new opportunities. "Growing pains are necessary pains," she said.

Her frantic search for a new space led her to the Norland School Hall Community Centre at 3448 County Road 45, where Mary Saigeon, the welcoming Norland librarian, led her upstairs into the McLauchlin room. "It was filled with tables, chairs, and cobwebs," Abrenica said, "but I saw its potential."

She laughs when people ask her why she chose to coach in Norland, to which she usually replies, "I didn't choose Norland. Norland chose me."

The new space allowed for Open Sky to hit the ground running. Within the first month of the relocation, Abrenica gained over thirty new student memberships. "The response really proved to me how in need the community is of youth programming," she said.

But Abrenica emphasizes that Open Sky is about more than giving youth a space to be active or have something to do after school. "Jiu Jitsu is not just a sport," she said, "it's a lifestyle and way of understanding yourself."

Predominately a ground-based martial art, Jiu Jitsu uses the principles of leverage, angles, pressure, and timing, as well as knowledge of the human anatomy, to achieve control with the choice to submit one's opponent. The word 'Jiu Jitsu' translates from Japanese to "gentle art".

Emphasis on Jiu Jitsu as a gentle practice is important to Coach V. "I want people to see life lessons in the practice and learn how to approach other aspects of life with skills they learn here," she said. "It's about learning to be gentle, in what can sometimes be a harsh world."

"I strongly believe that Jiu Jitsu makes better people," Abrenica said. "Open Sky is working to build a community of leaders who can think and act for themselves by fostering the development of self-worth and self-awareness."

One of Coach V's main goals is also to connect and inspire women in the community. "I want to destigmatize martial arts and show that a woman is capable of doing it." She is working towards developing a women-specific program, that will be centred on female self-defence and empowerment.

The original three students who inspired Coach V to continue teaching are still her students today. Since March 2022, Open Sky has taken on dozens more students and has proved to be a staple in the community. In 2024, Abrenica hopes to continue building a strong team at Open Sky to provide this essential service. She also plans to create more adult-oriented programs to extend the reach of Jiu Jitsu's benefits in the county.

"Open Sky has deeper roots to grow," Abrenica said, "and I am ready to water them." Teaching us that when we ask for help, learn to adapt, and grow together, the sky really is the limit.

For more information about Open Sky's classes, visit their Facebook or Instagram page or reach out to Coach V at openskyjiujitsu@gmail.com or 647-208-2764.

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4	5					7	3	
1			2	3				6
			9					
2			4					8
7	1	8		2				
3				8			4	
	4	1					7	
6	2		1					5

Level: Intermediate

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Answers on page 15

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills proposes to consider by-laws to stop up, close, and convey those parcels of land more particularly described as follows:

1. File No. PLSRA2023017: Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Gull Lake, lying in front of 1053 Bud's Lane located within Lot 21, Concession 7, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

2. File No. PLSRA2022063: Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Canning Lake, lying in front of 1126 Dugan Road located within Lot 17, Concession 1, Geographic Township of Minden

3. File No. PLSRA2023012: Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Gull Lake, lying in front of 1032 Pacific Road located within Lot 22, Concession 6, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

4. File No. PLSRA2023013: Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Gull Lake, lying in front of 1031 Hoffman Road located within Lot 22, Concession 6, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

The Council meeting to consider a by-law to stop up, close and convey the parcels listed above will be scheduled for **January 25, 2024**.

The above noted applications are available for inspection in the Building and Planning Department located at 7 Milne Street, Minden, Ontario by appointment only. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the undersigned or by visiting www.mindenhills.ca/newsroom.

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE any person who claims that their land will be prejudicially affected is asked to contact the undersigned at their earliest convenience. If deemed advisable, By-laws giving effect to the proposed closure and conveyance will be passed by the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills.

Amanda Dougherty, B.A. (Hons)
Township Planning Consultant
705-742-2297x278
adougherty@mindenhills.ca

Highlands Summer Festival presents Flannel Frolic

by **VIVIAN COLLINGS**
Times Staff

Highlands Summer Festival (HSF) has stitched together the perfect blanket to warm up a cold January night: their first ever Flannel Frolic.

Grab your favourite flannel, your partner, and some friends on Friday, Jan. 19 for a fundraiser dance, dinner, and auction to support HSF's upcoming season.

Taking place at the Haliburton Legion, the night will feature live music by local band Adverse Conditions, a delicious homemade dinner, and auctions and draws.

"It's going to be such a fun party. We've got a really good band, we've got really good food, and it's flannel. You don't have to get gussied up," said HSF board member Sean Pennylegion. "It's an opportunity for us to connect with the community outside of the summer season."

The fundraiser was created by Pennylegion and fellow board member Sue Vorvis as a casual way to get the community together after some difficult seasons for the theatre due to COVID-19 health measures.

"We were dark for two seasons during COVID, and we have monthly expenses, and like every other not-for-profit organization, the pandemic was difficult," Pennylegion said. "We have a great season coming up, and the extra support from this fundraiser will go towards that."

Adverse Conditions was chosen to perform because of their outstanding performances at other venues in 2023.

"They're a newer band and it's made up of 11 incredible local musicians," Pennylegion said. "They have a killer horn section and amazing vocalists. We're so excited to have them be part of the night."

If the food, entertainment, and plaid attire weren't enough, the event is also hosting the famous "Jack Brezina Toonie Auction" during intermission.

One by one, Brezina will go through a number of items up for auction individually.

Tickets for each are purchased with toonies.

"It's fast and great fun with Jack's commentary and people yelling out numbers all over the place," Pennylegion laughed.

The event will also feature a silent auction and 50/50 draw.

"We have a full staff of kitchen volunteers, and then a number of volunteers will be making everything happen during the evening," Pennylegion said.

This year, HSF is presenting five shows: The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, The Miracle Worker, The Birds and the Bees, The Good Lovelies, and Leisa Way's Opry Gold.

"We're very fortunate to have live theatre in our community. We put on such great shows," Pennylegion said.

Tickets can be purchased at tickets.highlandssummerfestival.on.ca/product/flannel-frolic or by calling 705-457-9933.

Tickets are $90 per couple and $50 for a single.

"It's a very important piece of the mosaic that is Haliburton County, and we're so excited to have community support with this fundraiser," Pennylegion said.

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

NOTICE: SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL &PUBLIC MEETING – 2024 BUDGET PROCESS

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills will be holding a Public Meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 09:00 am during its Special Council Meeting regarding the 2024 Budget Process.

To view the full notice and for more information visit www.mindenhills.ca or contact our office at 705-286-1260.

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4	5	2	8	6	9	7	3	1
1	8	7	2	3	4	9	5	6
5	3	4	9	1	8	2	6	7
2	9	6	4	7	3	5	1	8
7	1	8	5	2	6	4	9	3
3	7	5	6	8	2	1	4	9
8	4	1	3	9	5	6	7	2
6	2	9	1	4	7	3	8	5

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570 NOTICES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on behalf of Felice Mueller application will be made to the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario for an Act to revive Qui Vive Island Club Inc. the Qui Vive Island Club Inc. Act 2023. The application may be considered by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Any person who has an interest in the application and who wishes to make submissions, for or against the application, to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs should notify, in writing, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A2. Dated at Portland, Oregon, USA, this 23rd day of November, 2023.FELICE MUELLER

540 COMING EVENTS

the arts council haliburton highlands

Annual General Meeting
Tuesday January 30, 2024
7 pm
Register on Eventbrite and join us on Zoom for a review of last year.
All are welcome to attend.
https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/agm-tickets-789134651987

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Minden Times

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Douglas "Doug" Glen McElwain

(Resident of Fenelon Falls)

Peacefully at Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay on Saturday January 6, 2024 in his 86th year. Beloved husband and best friend of Darlene McElwain (nee Gill). Loving father of Nancy (Randy Martin) and Janet (Tim Sargent). Fondly remembered by his grandchildren Shannon (Mike), Corey, Kevin (Genevieve), Adam (Jordan) and by his great grandchildren Issac, Zackary, Kase, Kielle and Everett. Dear brother of William and Linda (Len Thompson) and Donna. Predeceased by his great grandson Cameron, his sisters Florence, Bonnie, Diane, Patricia and by his brothers Wilson, Wallace, Harry, Donald and Gerald. Also lovingly remembered by many nieces and nephews. Doug worked for Holland Lumber in Oshawa for many years as a truck driver. He enjoyed country music and most of all his family.

Visitation & Funeral Service

Friends were invited to call at the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME** 13523 Hwy. #118, Haliburton, Ontario **(705) 457-9209** on Monday morning, January 15, 2024 from 11 a.m until time of the Funeral Service in the Chapel at 12 o'clock (Noon). Interment later South Wilberforce Cemetery. As an expression of sympathy, donations to a charity of your choice would be appreciated by the family.

www.communityfuneralhomes.com

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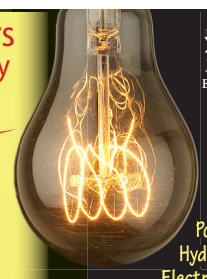

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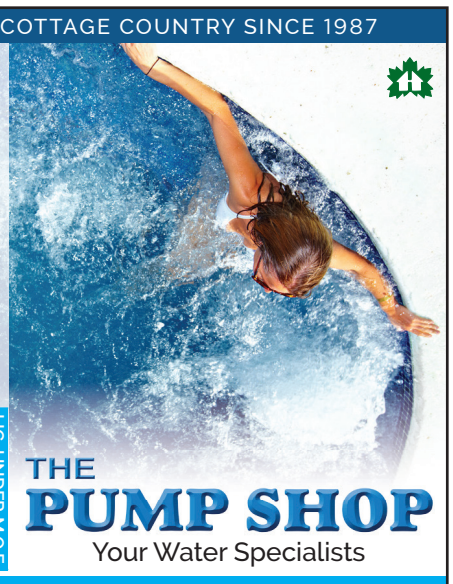

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Victoria Road residents lose OMB battle

The Ontario Municipal Board has approved the bid by a Fenelon Falls lawyer to developed a quarry near Victoria Road. After eleven days of arduous hearings and months of protest, the OMB approved the plan to expand an area of the Carden Plain to quarry limestone from James Webster's family farm.

Five W Farms attempted to build the quarry on 470 acres that the Webster family has owned since 1959. Part of the construction of the quarry involved a change to the Victoria County Official Plan. A group of concerned residents from Victoria Road and the surrounding area opposed the construction, citing problems with noise, dust and water contamination. The group has been working since early spring in 1998 to gather research and expert witnesses to support its claim at the Ontario Municipal Board hearing, held in Coboconk in November. The OMB judgement was returned last week and according to Webster, it is hoped that work in the quarry will be underway by the summer. "It was a long process," said Webster. "We got nothing that we were not prepared to accept."

Residents of Victoria Road were upset over the ruling and are now reviewing their options. Michael Poulson was one of the presenters speaking on behalf of those opposed to the quarry. The group was concerned that the community of Victoria Road would be detrimentally affected by the construction of a quarry. "It was exhausting," said Poulson, of the eleven day OMB hearing process. Representatives from both sides met in

(more on page 18)

AND THEY'RE OFF!: The fifteenth annual Minden Techni-cal Challenge Sled Dog Derby proved to be yet another successful race. Crowds of people gathered to watch the two days of racing, which begins and ends on Main Street. Here Musher Gary Callaghan tears out of the start gate and on to a first place finish in the four dog class.

Ontario and Quebec drivers are tops in annual Sled Dog Derby

Ontario and Quebec drivers shared the top honours in this year's Minden Techni-Cal Challenge Sled Dog Derby, held January 16 and 17.

Jean LaFontaine of St. Theophil, Quebec captured the eight dog honours and top prize of $3,100 in prize money. His time for two days of racing was just over an hour at 1:00:25.95.

Top spot in the four dog class went to Gary Callaghan of Madison, Ohio. This was his second appearance at the event. His time was 32:03.18 giving him top prize of $1,600.

Prizes are awarded on the basis of the total time over two days of racing. On Sunday, both top finishers shaved significant seconds off their first heat on Saturday. Lafontaine covered the eight mile course on Saturday in 30:37.87 and completed the circuit on Sunday in 29:48.08. Callaghan's time over the four mile course for Saturday was 16:16.77, while on Sunday he completed the course in 15:46.41.

This was the fifteenth running of this annual event, which drew thousands of spectators to the small central Ontario community of Minden. Mushers from as far away as New Mexico and Colorado took part, with the largest contingents coming from Ontario and Quebec.

Race Governor Val Lougheed was extremely happy with the weekend of racing. "We had a great group of mushers who were very pleased with the conditions and the welcome they received from the Minden and area residents. The event, which is sponsored by Martin Pet Foods of Elmira, is staged with the assistance of over 150 volunteers.

Other top finishers in the eight dog class included: in second place, Real Turmel of St. Augustin, Quebec at 1:01:13.66; third Lou Serre of Markstay, Ontario at 1:02:03.88; fourth, Cindy Samburg-Jost of Paul Smiths, New York at 1:02:54.11; and Richard Therrien of St. Emile, Quebec at 1:02:56.45.

Those sharing the top five honours in the four dog class included: in second place, Pat Hnatiuk of Massey Ontario at 33:13.49; third, Lou Serre of Markstay, Ontario with a time of 33:13.98; fourth, Jean LaFontaine of St. Theophil, Quebec at 34:28.14; and fifth John Samburgh of Paul Smiths, New York, 34:55.26.

New to this year's event, and to the North American racing circuit, was the Junior Class, for mushers between the ages of eight and 13. Jaclyn Rice of Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania captured the top prize in this event.

Following last year's derby, which is sanctioned by the International Sled Dog Racing Association, participating mushers voted this event the best in the North America.

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